



Developed by the  
Independent Living  
Resource Center,  
San Francisco,  
California

WASHINGTON  
MILITARY  
DEPARTMENT

Emergency  
Management  
Division

[www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov)  
1-800-562-6108

Building 20, MS: TA-20  
Camp Murray, WA  
98430-5122

# Disaster Tips for People with Impaired Hearing

This checklist will assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired  
to be prepared when disasters strike.

## Hearing aids

- Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a disaster.
  - For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- Maintain TTY batteries. Consult your manual for information.
- Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

## Communication

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter," "I do not write or read English," and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- If possible, obtain a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.

- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera emergency duty.

## Alarms

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

## Advocacy

- Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- Maintain advocacy for TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- Ensure hotels have access packets for the deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including visual alarms, when you travel. Ask for them when you check in.

This fact sheet is part of the *Disaster Preparation Handbook 2004* prepared by the Washington State Department of Health and the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division.